

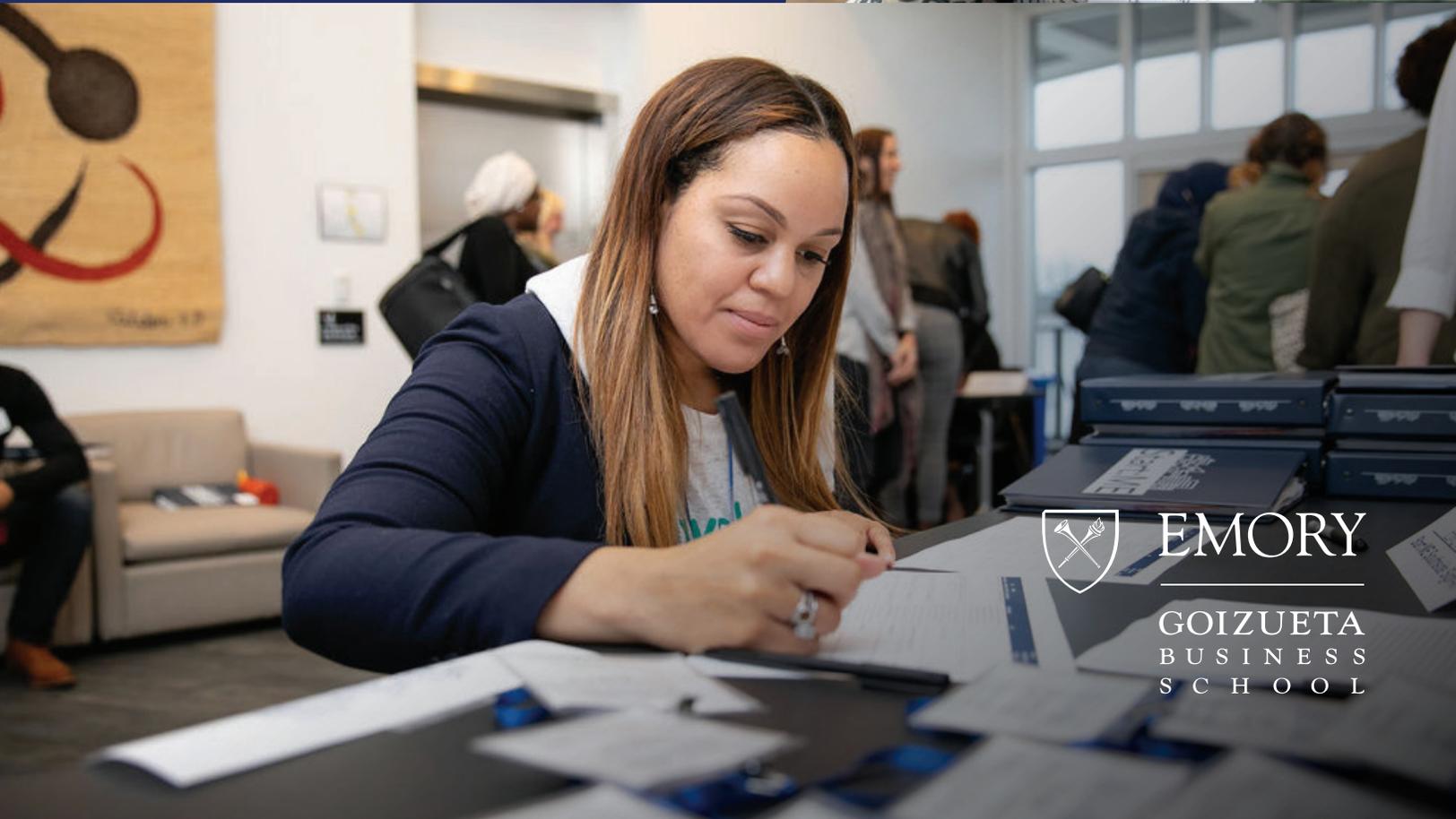


# Start:ME



## 2021 **IMPACT REPORT**

Starting and growing Atlanta's microbusinesses



EMORY

GOIZUETA  
BUSINESS  
SCHOOL

# MICROBUSINESS, MACRO IMPACT

At 1-4 employees, microbusinesses are individually quite small. But collectively, micro is big. Microbusinesses account for 92% of all U.S. businesses and create 41.3 million jobs.

You may be wondering how you, as one person, can make a difference. Just as microbusinesses together move markets, intentional consumers, volunteers, and donors create momentous impact.

So what can you do?

Shop intentionally - spend money at local small businesses

Volunteer your time - share your time, energy, and talents

Invest - donate money towards causes you support and champion

Advocate - push for truly inclusive policies and resources

Multiply your impact - encourage others in your networks to do the same

Your contributions and the contributions of many will help microbusinesses endure.



## Entrepreneurs Make It Work

Like entrepreneurs nationwide, our community has faced challenges. The majority saw a drop in sales and cut business hours. Some have closed their doors, pivoting their business and personal priorities. Many experienced health struggles, financial instability, stress, lack of childcare. In short, it's been a hard year.

But it's also been a year of adapting, hustling, and finding a way. Entrepreneurs are inventive and creative. They find the upside, the joy in the journey.

Our job has been to adapt along with them, hear their needs, make connections, share resources, and bring our own to the table.

We ran three-month accelerator cohorts virtually. Was it the same? No. But we brought the same quality of content, the same consistency of connection, and perhaps most importantly, the same welcoming, caring, honest, and supportive environment.

We expanded alumni support. Working with local experts, we offered legal consulting, branding, photography, professional development, and mental health and wellness. We connected alums to capital, new markets, and broader networks. And we listened, sought feedback, and built in response to our community's wants and needs.

Together, we adapt. We're making it work, whatever the circumstances. And we're fostering joy and genuine care along the way.

We look forward to continuing this journey together.

**Erin Igleheart and the Start:ME team**

# WHO WE ARE + OUR PASSION

Start:ME's mission is to strengthen Atlanta's underserved communities by empowering the entrepreneurs within them to start or grow businesses. We believe that promising entrepreneurs are everywhere and work to build the local, neighborhood ecosystem required for microbusinesses to start and grow. When these entrepreneurs thrive, their neighbors and neighborhoods do too.

## WHAT WE DO

Start:ME is an intensive 14-session, place-based business accelerator program for promising entrepreneurs who live in, work in, and/or provide valuable products and services to underserved neighborhoods. During the 14-sessions, and beyond, we connect those entrepreneurs to the business know-how, mentorship, and funding necessary to build and grow businesses.

### OUR MODEL



BUSINESS TRAINING



MENTORSHIP



EARLY STAGE CAPITAL



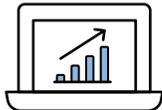
**"Start:ME was a very valuable tool for me to understand some aspects of my business that I didn't really grasp. Start:ME made it very clear to me the things that I was missing and the things that I needed. Start:ME is for anyone who has a heart and a desire to be an entrepreneur."**



Sonya King  
Beyond the Skys Catering, Southside 2020

# THE START:ME EXPERIENCE

## WHAT YOU LEARN



BUSINESS PLAN  
BASICS



CUSTOMER INSIGHTS



LEGAL STRUCTURE



PITCH  
PRESENTATION



MARKETING



ACCOUNTING

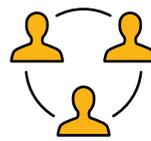


INVESTMENT  
PATHWAYS

## WHAT YOU GAIN



BUSINESS SKILLS



PEER NETWORK



GRANT ACCESS



DETAILED FINANCIALS



BUSINESS PLAN



STRONG PITCH



COMMITTED MENTORS

# WHERE WE WORK

Entrepreneurship is a team sport. Start:ME is delivered by Emory University's Goizueta Business School in partnership with trusted community lead nonprofit organizations. Together we build ecosystems, businesses, and communities.



Start:ME is made possible through the generous support of our donor partners.

## Sponsors



## Lead Delivery Partners



# OUR OUTCOMES

Since 2013, we've built a community that is helping entrepreneurs thrive.



MICROBUSINESSES SERVED



ANNUAL REVENUE



JOB'S CREATED OR RETAINED



VENTURES LED BY  
PEOPLE OF COLOR



FEMALE-LED BUSINESS



VOLUNTEER MENTORS



BRICK AND MORTARS



ALUMNI ACTIVELY  
OPERATING



CAPITAL AWARDED

# CLARKSTON

In partnership with Friends of Refugees, Start:ME Clarkston supports local entrepreneurs from all backgrounds. Since 2013, Start:ME has served 131 local businesses that reflect and embrace the city's diverse skills, abilities, and offerings.



## The Statistics

131

MICROBUSINESSES  
SERVED

\$4.2M

IN ANNUAL  
REVENUES

192

JOBS CREATED /  
RETAINED

36

COUNTRIES OF  
ORIGIN

## Our Coalition



EMORY

GOIZUETA  
BUSINESS  
SCHOOL



Friends  
of Refugees



“I feel so honored and just simply blessed to be part of such an amazing, caring, and talented team of entrepreneurs. You guys literally Started:ME and I am forever grateful.”



Akissi Stokes  
WunderGRUBS, Clarkston 2016

# EAST LAKE

In partnership with the East Lake Foundation, Start:ME has been working in the East Lake, Edgewood, and Kirkwood communities since 2015. The 110 local businesses Start:ME has served to date bring economic and social vibrancy to the community and its members.



## The Statistics

110

MICROBUSINESSES  
SERVED

\$4.4M

IN ANNUAL  
REVENUES

202

JOBS CREATED /  
RETAINED

11

BRICK AND  
MORTARS

## Our Coalition



EMORY

GOIZUETA  
BUSINESS  
SCHOOL

East Lake  
FOUNDATION



the villages of  
East Lake

“That initial success is often easy, maintaining it is hard. Start:ME gives you the tools to grow!”



Christopher Wedge

Sons of Pitches, East Lake 2016

# SOUTHSIDE

In partnership with Focused Community Strategies and Purpose Built Schools Atlanta, Start:ME Southside supports a diverse collection of in-town neighborhoods. The 62 local businesses Start:ME has served to date tap into the energy of Atlanta's Southside.



## The Statistics

62

MICROBUSINESSES SERVED

\$1.9M

IN ANNUAL REVENUES

106

JOBS CREATED / RETAINED

23

PEER SELECTED FOR GRANT CAPITAL

## Our Coalition



“Being part of Start:ME has been the growth and learning opportunity of a lifetime. Thank you all from my heart.”

“ Kristin Jordan  
Zumbido Atlanta, Southside 2021



# HOW TO SUPPORT START:ME



## Invest

Provide financial support for community-based programs



## Mentor

Put your business skills to work



## Shop

Buy local goods and services

JOIN US AT [STARTMEATL.ORG](http://STARTMEATL.ORG)